MADHVACHARYA

Madhvacharya (C. 1238–1317) propagated the *Bhakti Marg* or the path of devotion for God realisation. He felt no need to deny the world to realise God. Relying on logic, and quoting profusely from the scriptures, he made a strong case for theism. His school of thought is known as *dvaita* which stands for two realities – Independent and dependent. The infinitely perfect God is independent and the world of matter and spirits is dependent on God. He advocated total surrender to God to achieve salvation.

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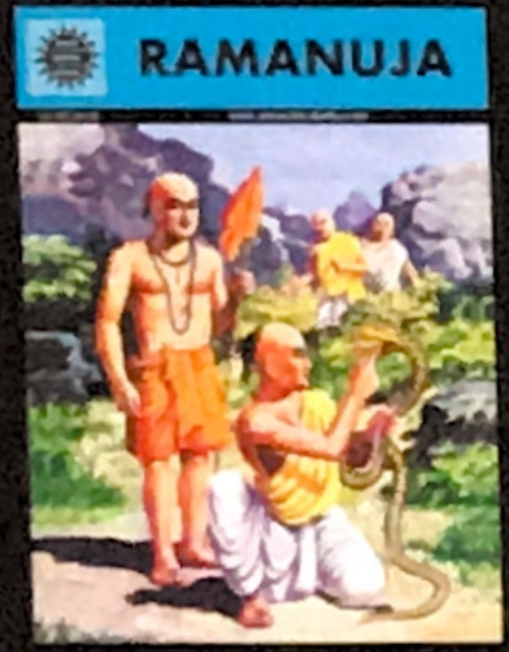

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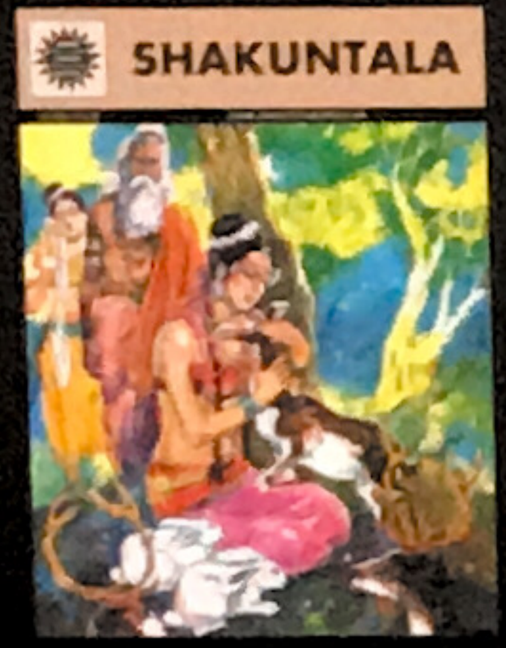

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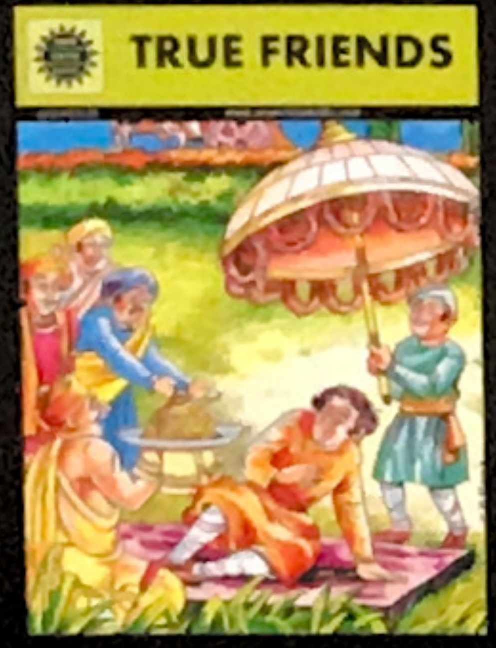

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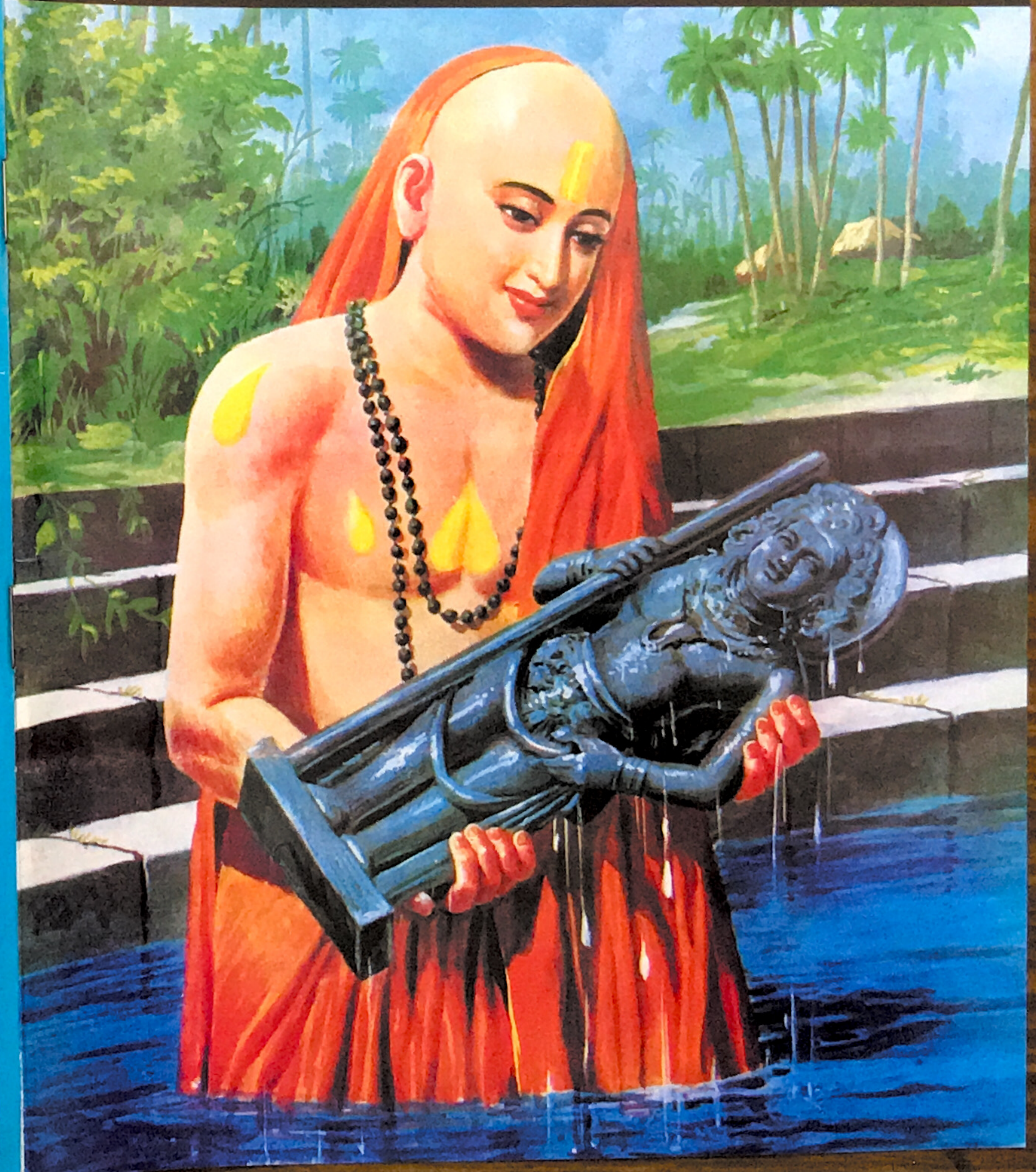
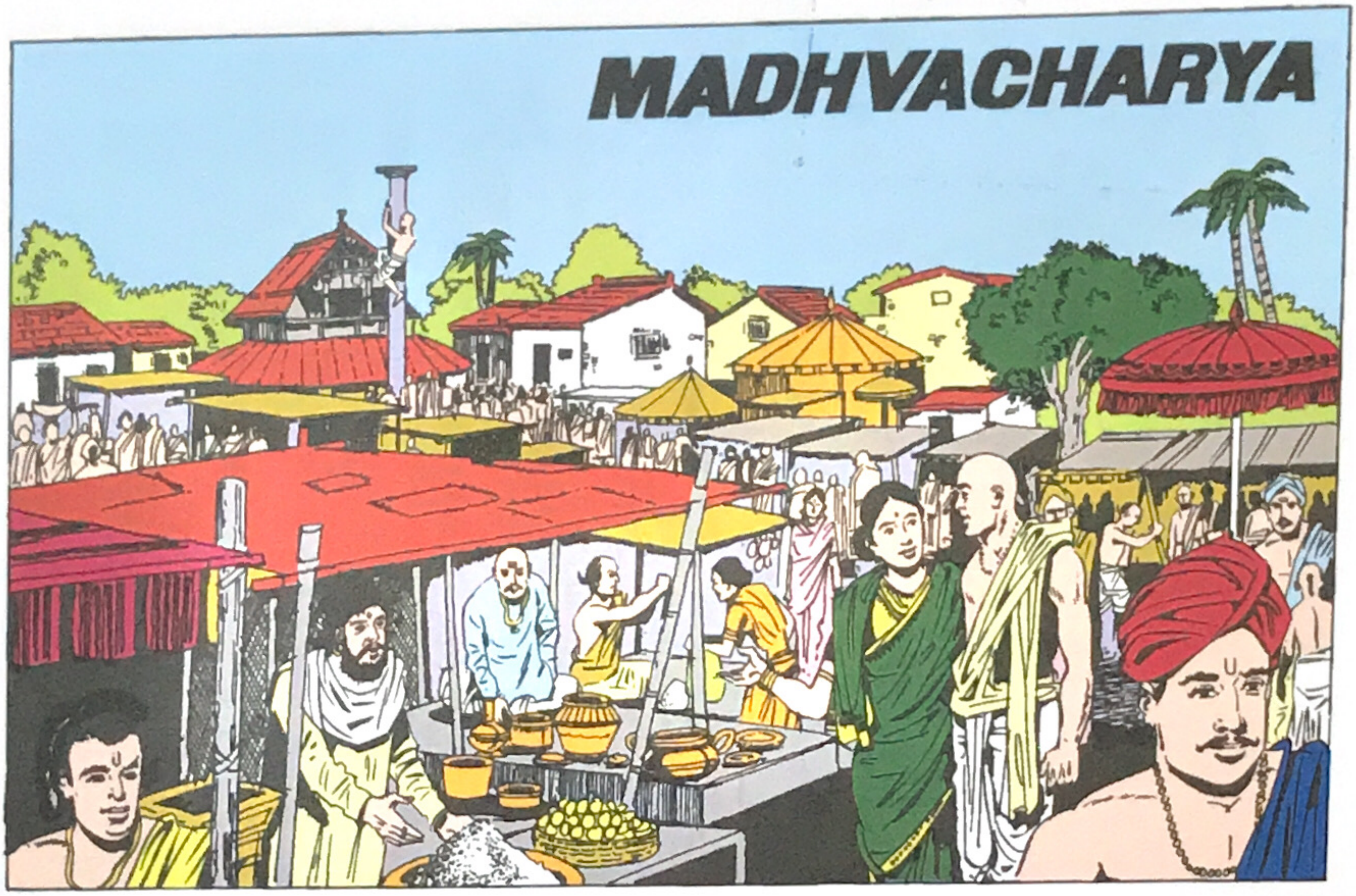
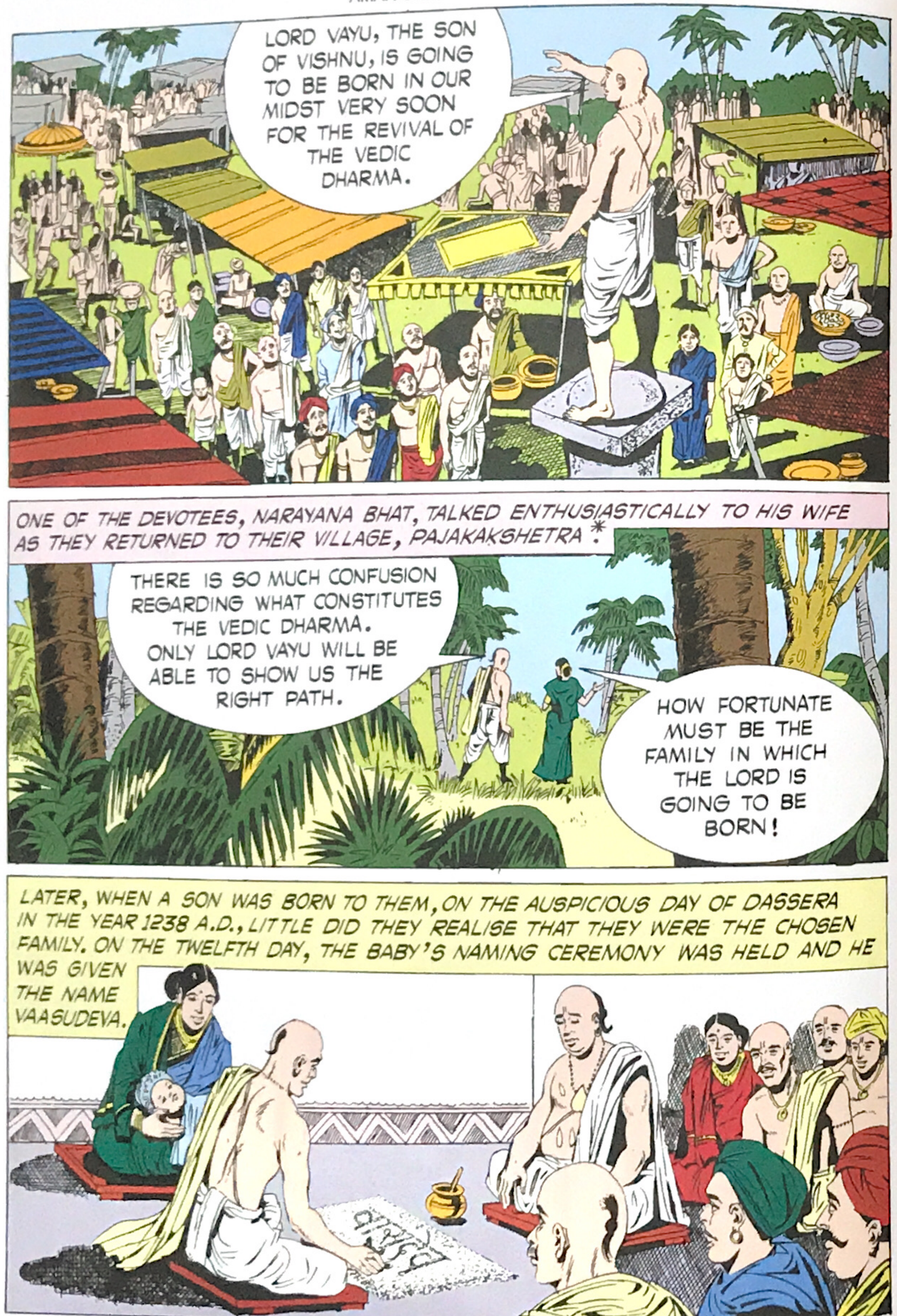


MADHVACHARYA



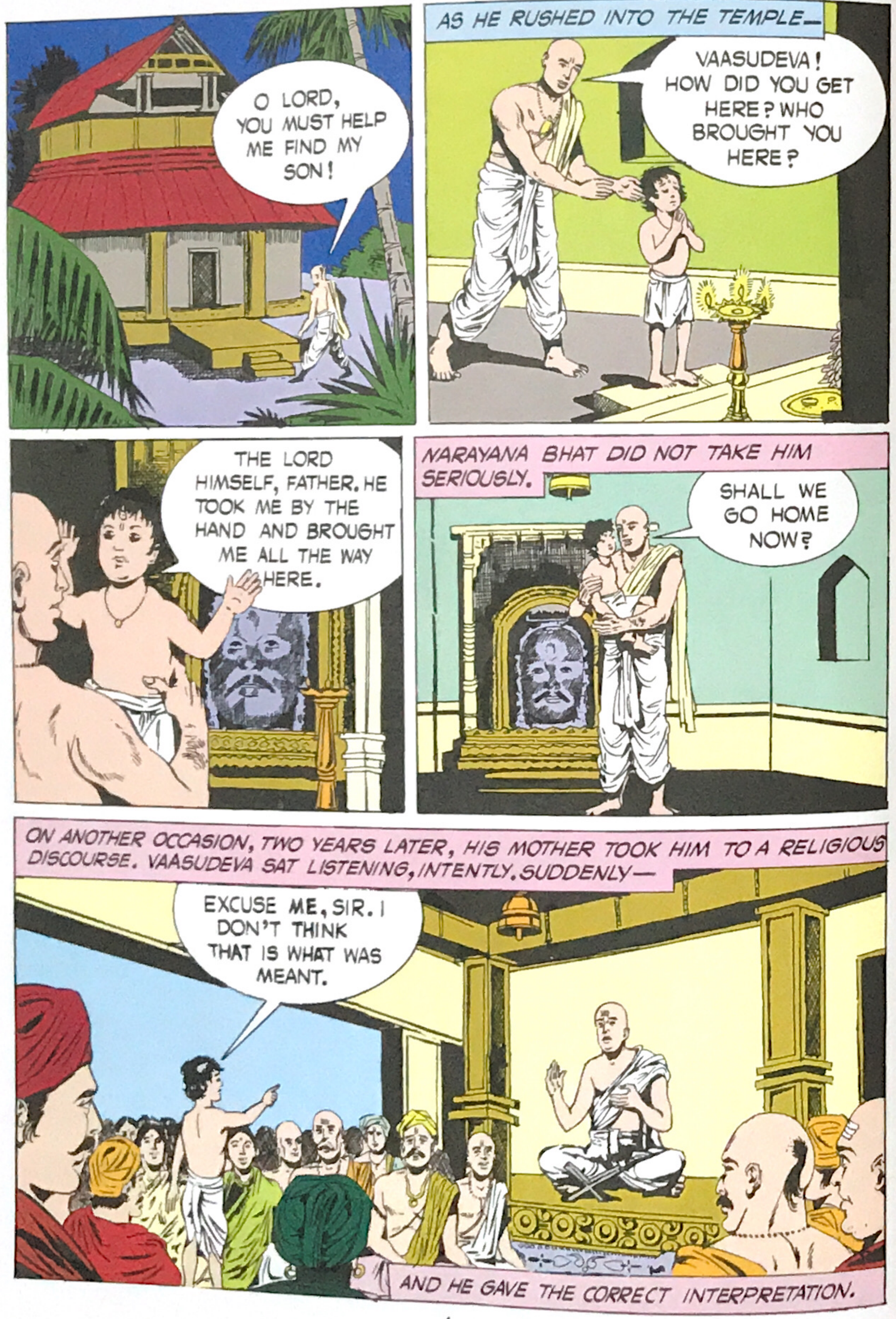
A VAST NUMBER OF DEVOTEES HAD GATHERED AT THE ANCIENT TEMPLE OF ANANTESHWARA IN UDUPI*, FOR THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL. SUDDENLY—

* A COASTAL TOWN OF KARNATAKA 卐 FLAGPOST IN FRONT OF A TEMPLE

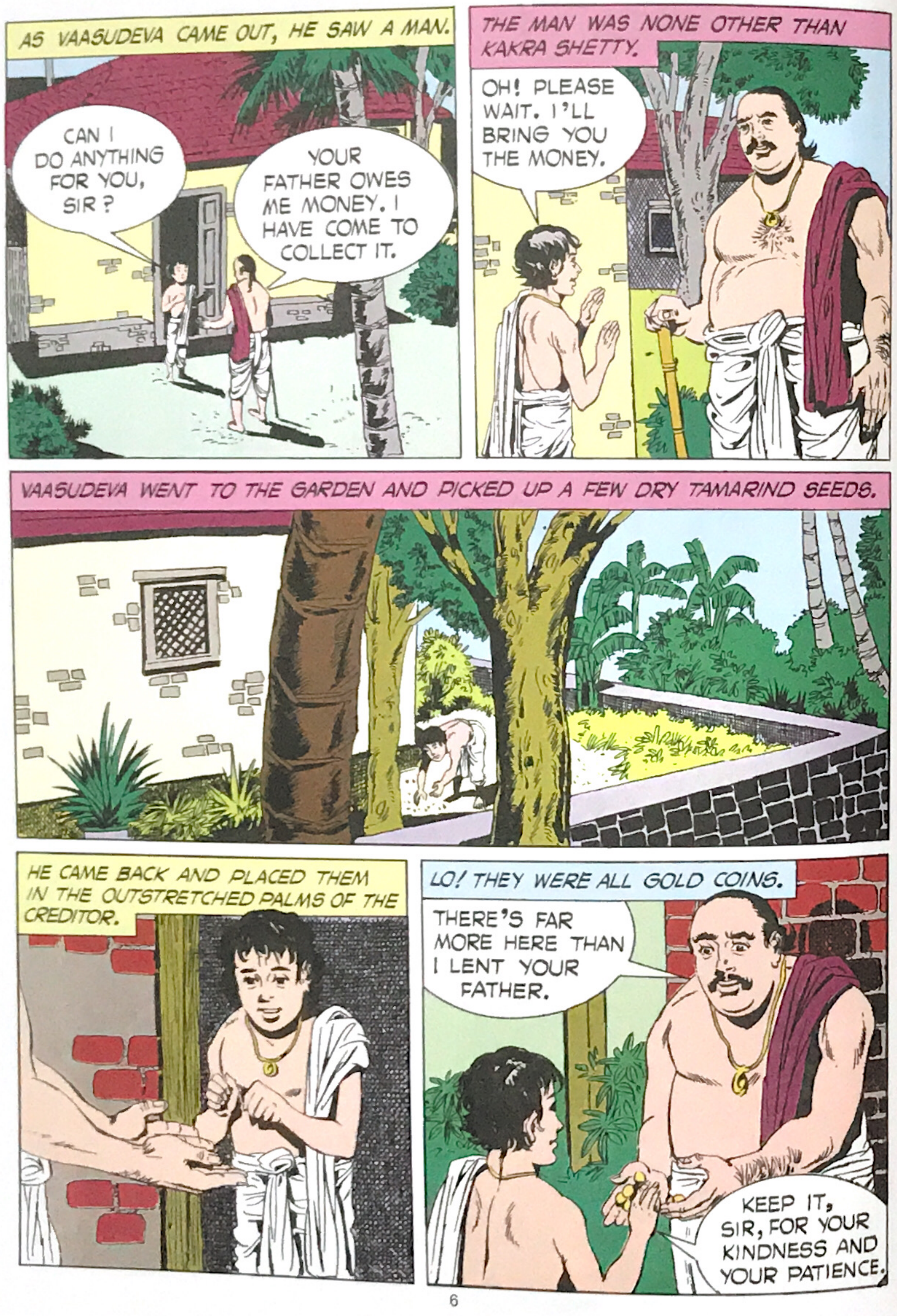

LORD VAYU, THE SON OF VISHNU, IS GOING TO BE BORN IN OUR MIDST VERY SOON FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE VEDIC DHARMA.
ONE OF THE DEVOTEES, NARAYANA BHAT, TALKED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO HIS WIFE AS THEY RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGE, PAJAKAKSHETRA*.
THERE IS SO MUCH CONFUSION REGARDING WHAT CONSTITUTES THE VEDIC DHARMA. ONLY LORD VAYU WILL BE ABLE TO SHOW US THE RIGHT PATH.
HOW FORTUNATE MUST BE THE FAMILY IN WHICH THE LORD IS GOING TO BE BORN!
LATER, WHEN A SON WAS BORN TO THEM, ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY OF DASSERA IN THE YEAR 1238 A.D., LITTLE DID THEY REALISE THAT THEY WERE THE CHOSEN FAMILY. ON THE TWELFTH DAY, THE BABY'S NAMING CEREMONY WAS HELD AND HE WAS GIVEN THE NAME VAASUDEVA.

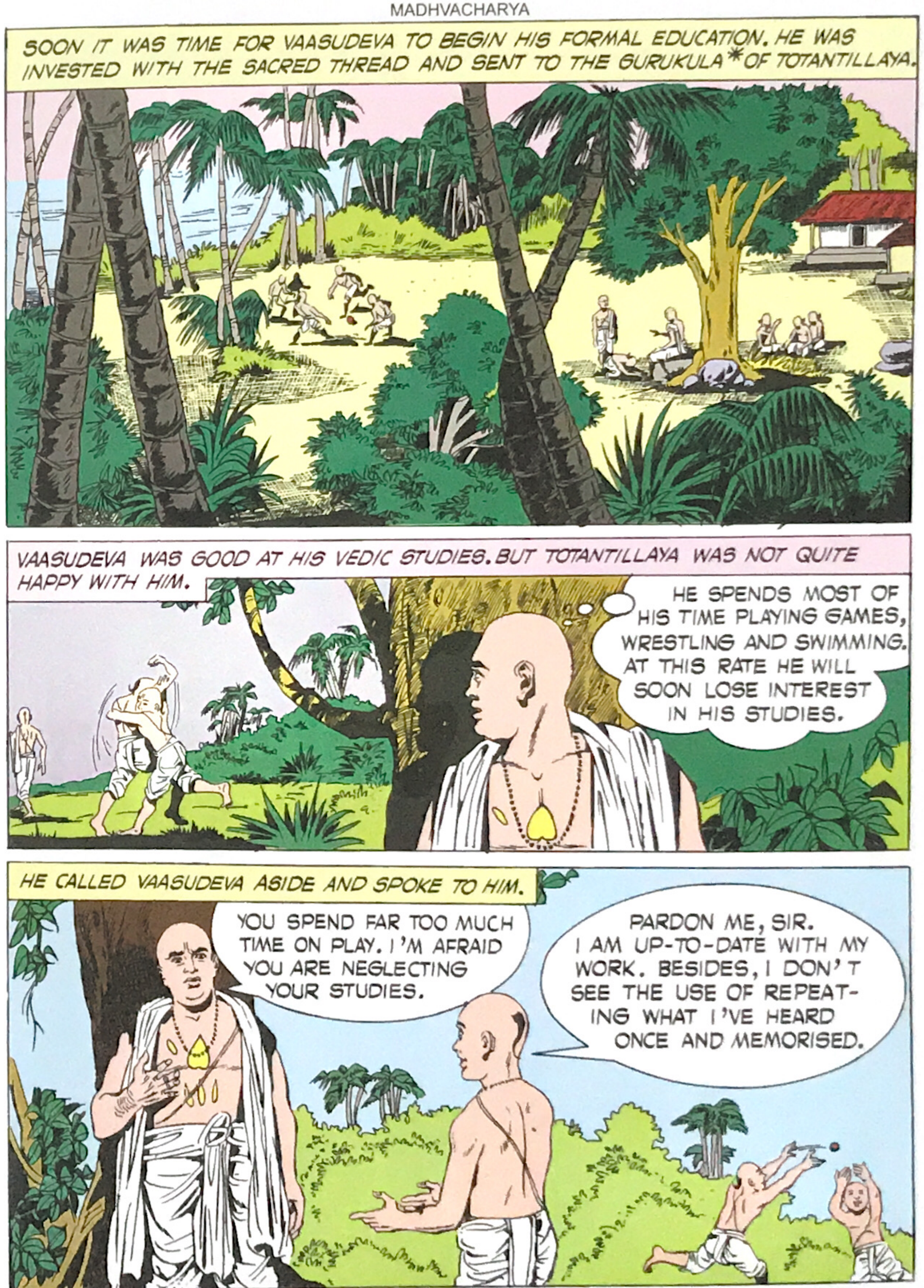
* NEAR UDUPI

ONCE WHEN VAASUDEVA WAS BARELY THREE YEARS OLD—
WHERE IS VAASUDEVA?
I THOUGHT HE WAS WITH YOU IN THE KITCHEN.
WAIT HERE. I'LL GO OUT AND LOOK FOR HIM.
THE ANXIOUS NARAYANA BHAT WENT OUT IN SEARCH OF HIS SON.
VAASUDEVA-A-A!
HE WALKED AS FAR AS THE TEMPLE OF ANANTESHWARA BUT THERE WAS NO TRACE OF THE TODDLER.
WHAT SHALL I DO? WHERE SHALL I LOOK FOR HIM?

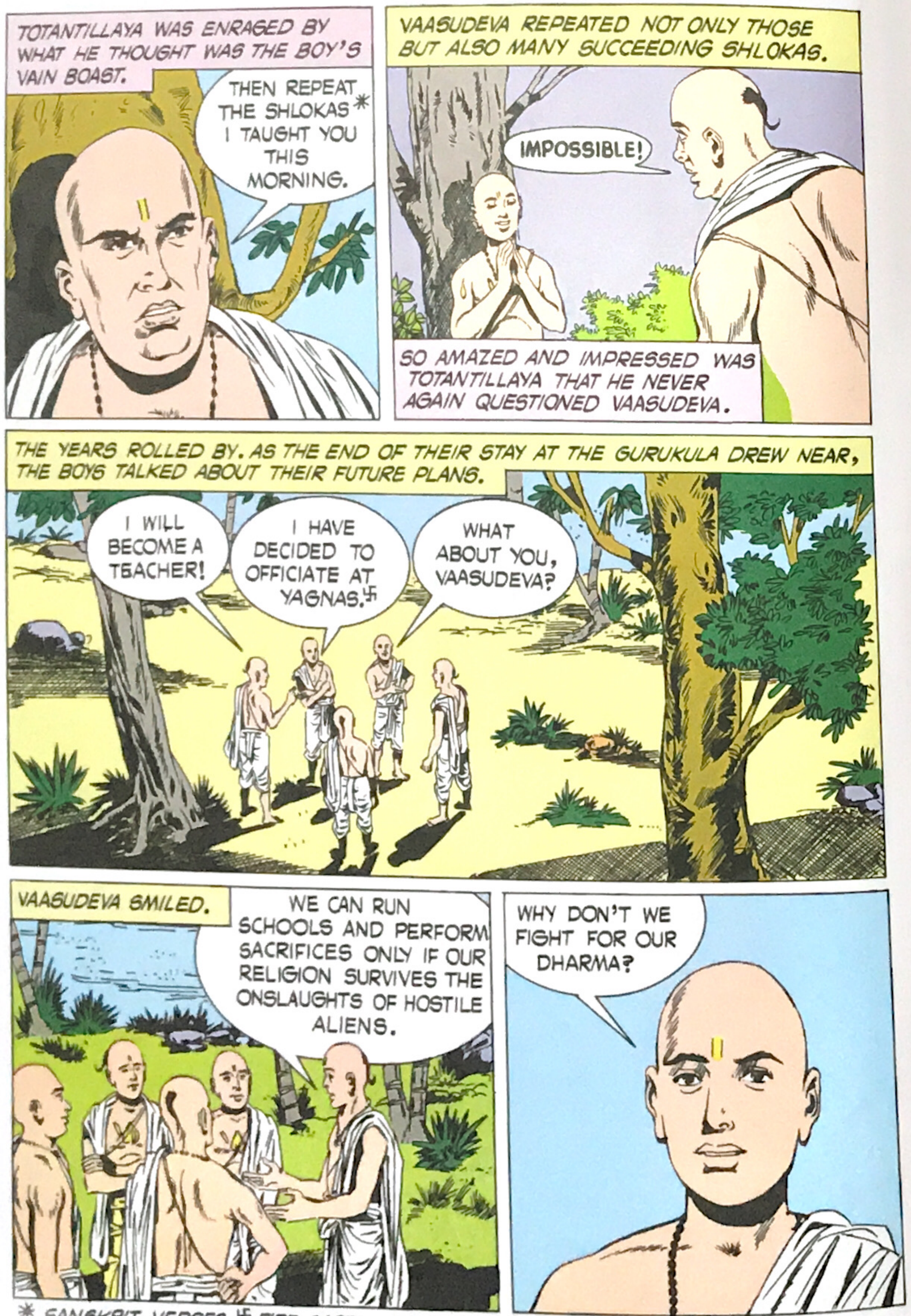

O LORD, YOU MUST HELP ME FIND MY SON!
AS HE RUSHED INTO THE TEMPLE—
VAASUDEVA! HOW DID YOU GET HERE? WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE?
THE LORD HIMSELF, FATHER. HE TOOK ME BY THE HAND AND BROUGHT ME ALL THE WAY HERE.
NARAYANA BHAT DID NOT TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY.
SHALL WE GO HOME NOW?
ON ANOTHER OCCASION, TWO YEARS LATER, HIS MOTHER TOOK HIM TO A RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE. VAASUDEVA SAT LISTENING, INTENTLY. SUDDENLY—
EXCUSE ME, SIR. I DON'T THINK THAT IS WHAT WAS MEANT.
AND HE GAVE THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION.

MY CHILD, YOUR LOVE OF TRUTH AND YOUR COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR IT MARK YOU OUT AS A GREAT SOUL.
NOT ONLY WAS VAASUDEVA GIFTED WITH SPIRITUAL INSIGHT BUT HE WAS ENDOWED WITH MIRACULOUS POWERS TOO. ONE MORNING—
KAKRA SHETTY HAS BEEN VERY PATIENT. BUT I CANNOT MAKE HIM WAIT ANY LONGER. I MUST GIVE HIM THE MONEY TODAY. SOMEHOW! ANYHOW!
HE LOOKS WORRIED. I WONDER WHAT'S TROUBLING HIM.
THAT AFTERNOON—
VAASUDEVA, PLEASE TELL YOUR FATHER, LUNCH IS READY.
YES, MOTHER.
HE STILL HASN'T RETURNED.
I'LL GO OUT AND LOOK FOR HIM.

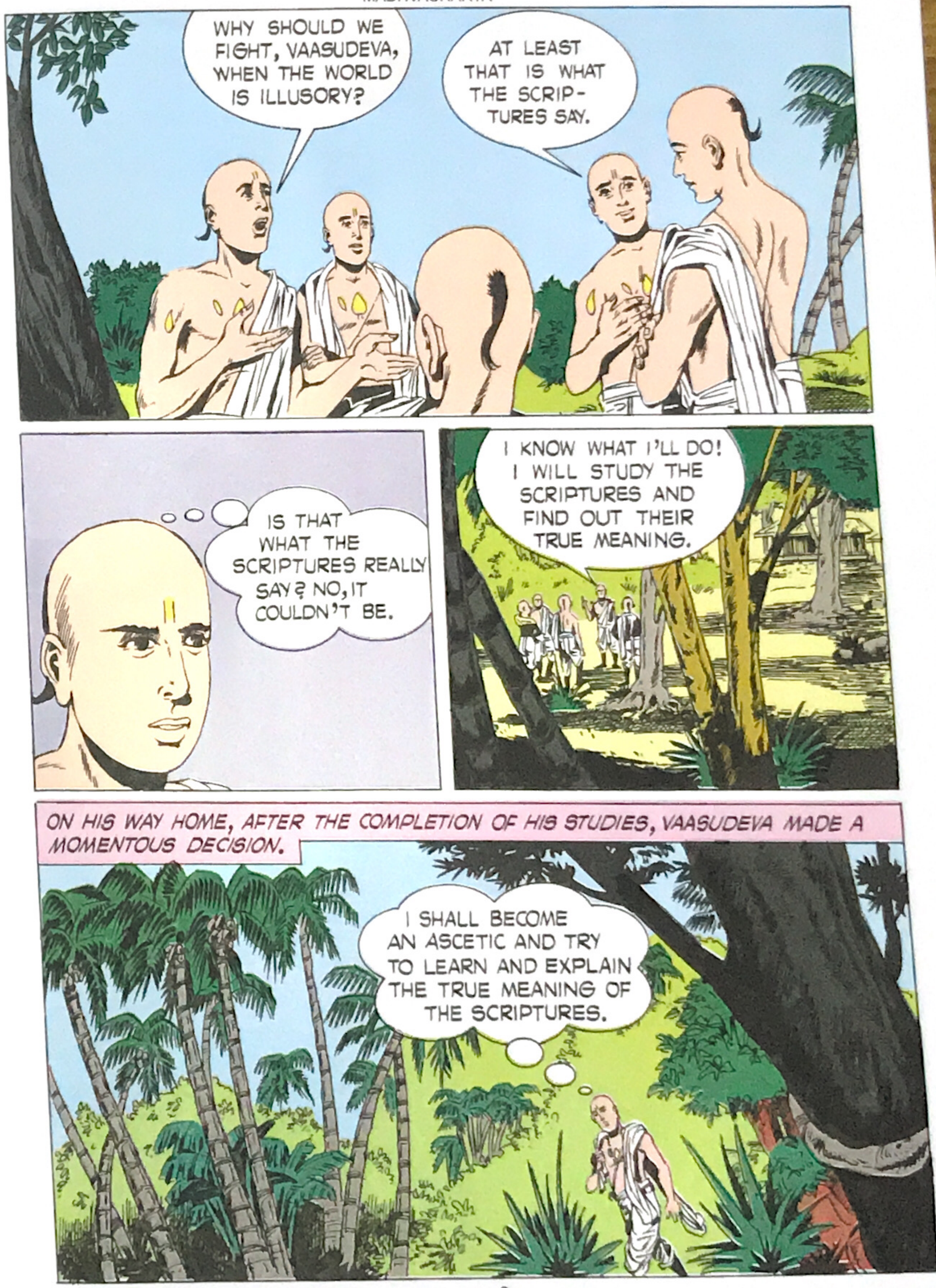




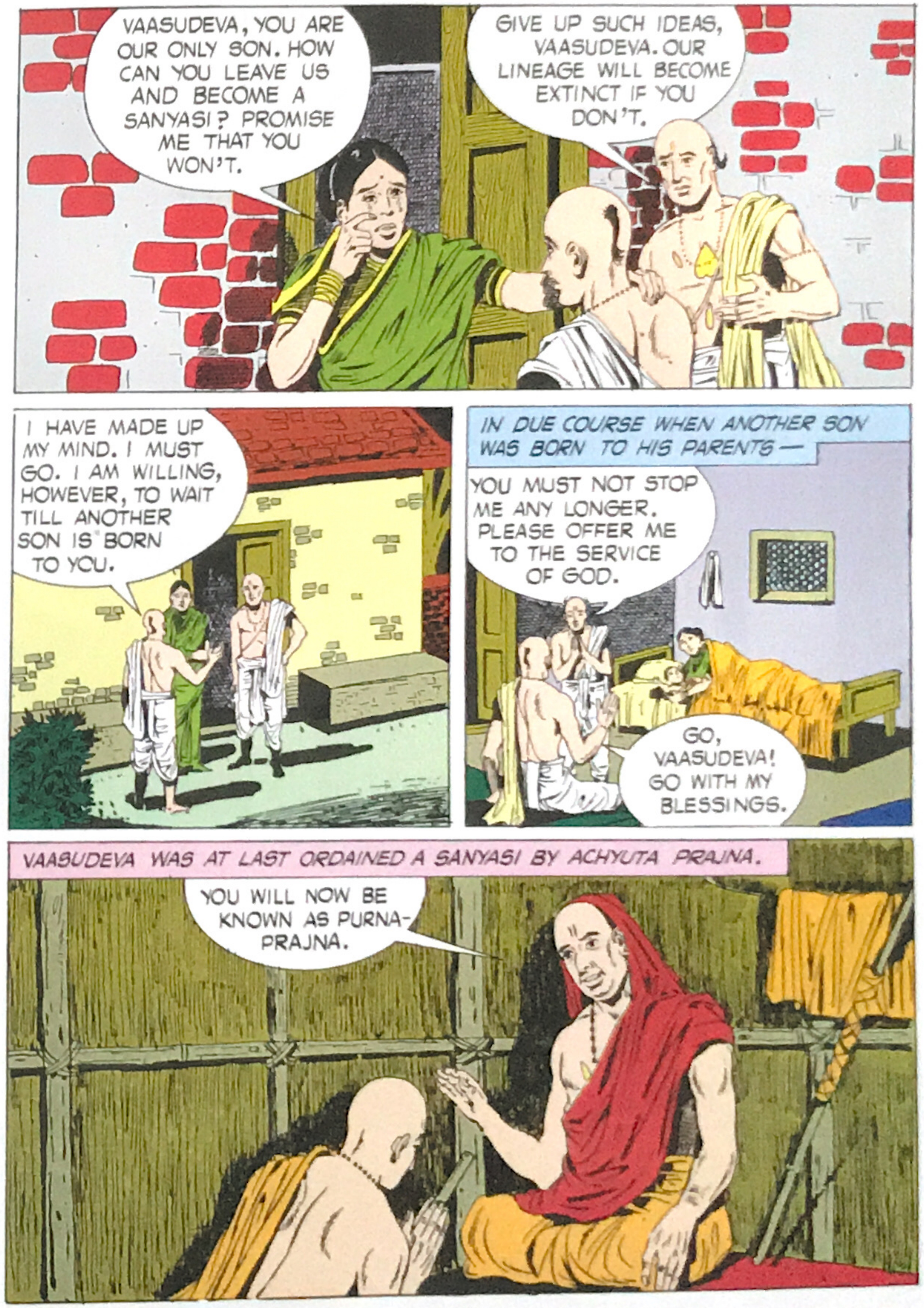
* ABODE OF THE TEACHER WHERE THE STUDENTS STAYED AND STUDIED



* SANSKRIT VERSES 卐 FIRE SACRIFICES

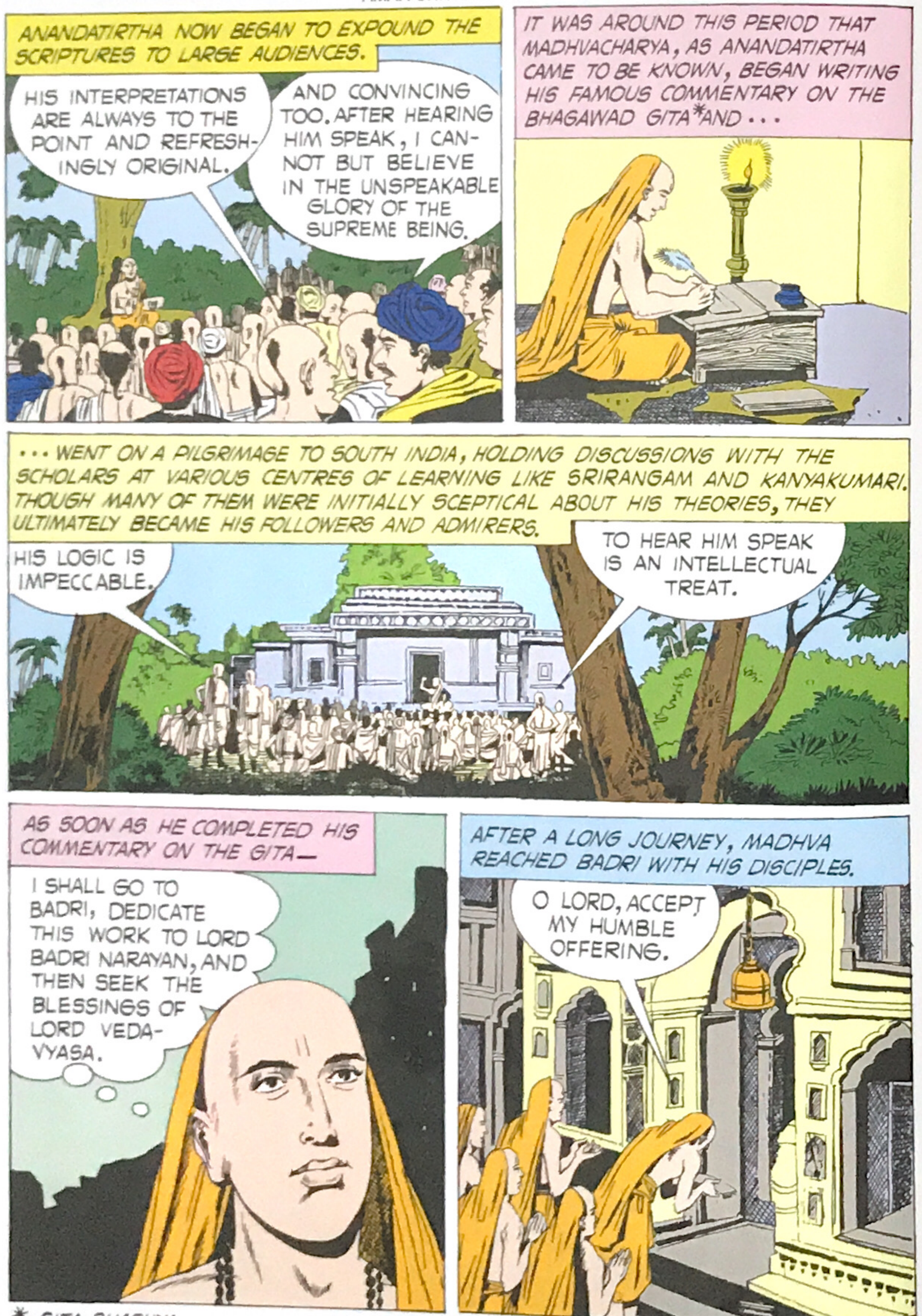


IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, HE WOULD OFTEN DISAPPEAR FROM HOME FOR HOURS AT A TIME.
WHERE IS VAASUDEVA?
HE HAS GONE OUT.
THAT EVENING—
WHERE WERE YOU?
WITH ACHYUTA PRAJNA, THE ASCETIC.
VAASUDEVA HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN UNUSUAL CHILD. WHAT IF HE LEAVES US AND DECIDES TO BECOME AN ASCETIC? IT WOULD BREAK HIS MOTHER'S HEART.
MY SON, SOME DAY YOU WILL MARRY AND LEAD THE LIFE OF A HOUSEHOLDER. WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH ASCETICS?
I HAVE DECIDED NOT TO MARRY. I WOULD LIKE TO RENOUNCE THE WORLD. PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR BLESSINGS.
NO! NO! VAASUDEVA!

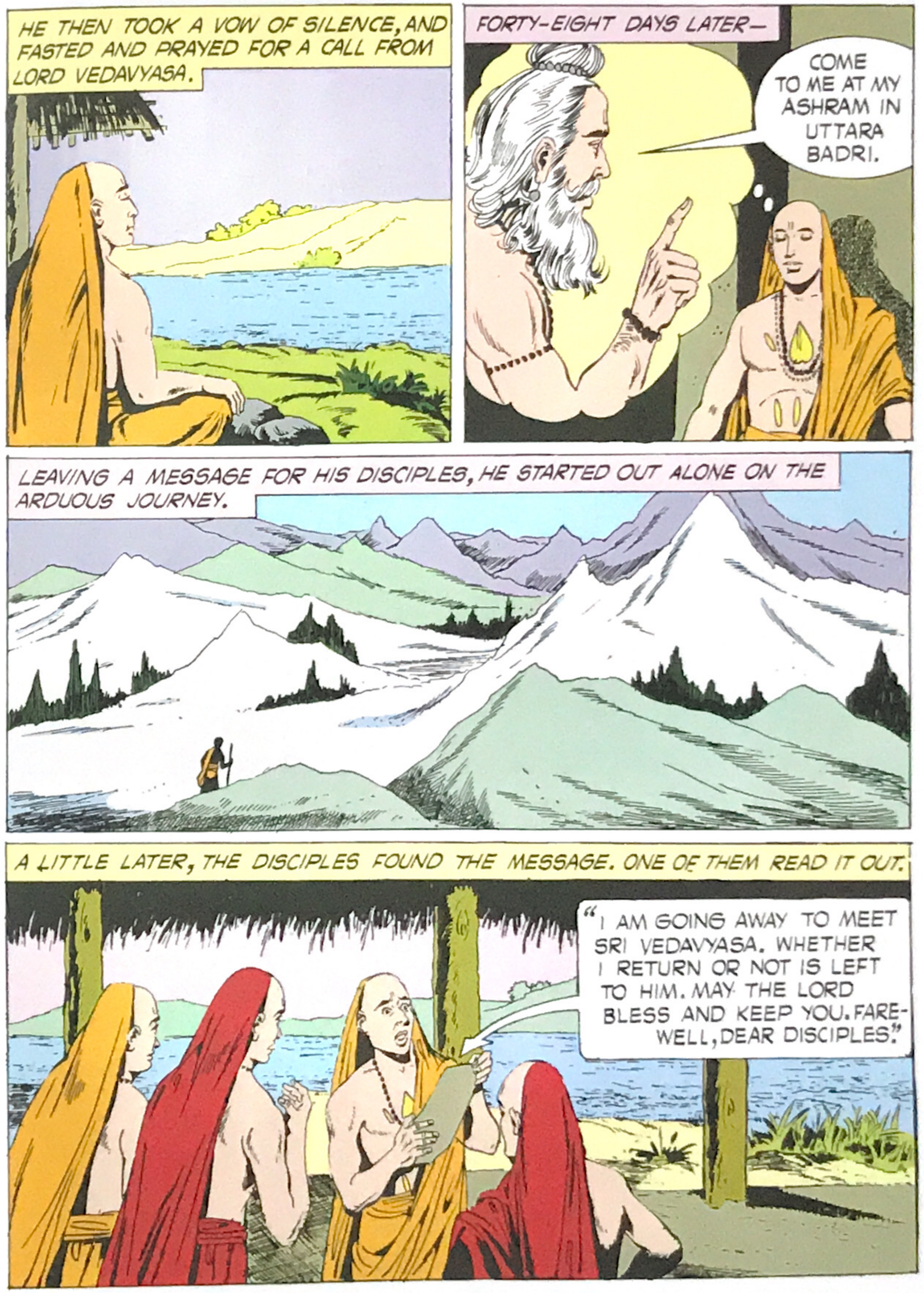

VAASUDEVA, YOU ARE OUR ONLY SON. HOW CAN YOU LEAVE US AND BECOME A SANYASI? PROMISE ME THAT YOU WON'T.
GIVE UP SUCH IDEAS, VAASUDEVA. OUR LINEAGE WILL BECOME EXTINCT IF YOU DON'T.
I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND. I MUST GO. I AM WILLING, HOWEVER, TO WAIT TILL ANOTHER SON IS BORN TO YOU.
IN DUE COURSE WHEN ANOTHER SON WAS BORN TO HIS PARENTS —
YOU MUST NOT STOP ME ANY LONGER. PLEASE OFFER ME TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.
GO, VAASUDEVA! GO WITH MY BLESSINGS.
VAASUDEVA WAS AT LAST ORDAINED A SANYASI BY ACHYUTA PRAJNA.
YOU WILL NOW BE KNOWN AS PURNA-PRAJNA.

AND PURNAPRAJNA SAT BEFORE HIS GURU.
THE SUPREME BRAHMAN IS THE ONLY REALITY.
BUT SIR...
TO ACHYUTA PRAJNA'S AMAZEMENT, THE YOUNG DISCIPLE RAISED MANY SERIOUS AND VALID QUERIES, WHICH HE COULD NOT ANSWER.
SOON AFTER THAT, TWO RENOWNED SCHOLARS CAME TO UDUPI.
WE HAVE COME TO HAVE A DISPUTATION WITH THE SCHOLARS HERE.
YOU ARE WELCOME. I HAVE THE RIGHT PERSON FOR YOU.
DURING THE DISPUTATION, PURNAPRAJNA'S SHARP INTELLECT ASTOUNDED THE VISITING SCHOLARS.
I WILL ANSWER YOU TOMORROW.
TAKE YOUR OWN TIME.

THAT NIGHT—
WE HAVE NO ANSWER. WE CAN'T FACE PURNAPRAJNA TOMORROW.
THE NEXT MORNING, AS THE ASSEMBLY WAITED FOR THE SCHOLARS TO APPEAR—
THE VISITORS ARE NOT TO BE FOUND.
NOT DARING TO MEET PURNAPRAJNA, THEY HAVE PROBABLY RUN AWAY.
ACHYUTA PRAJNA'S FACE BEAMED WITH SATISFACTION AND PRIDE. LATER—
I APPOINT YOU MY SUCCESSOR. YOU WILL NOW BE KNOWN AS ANANDATIRTHA.
THOUGH I STILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT HIS VIEWS.



* GITA BHASHYA

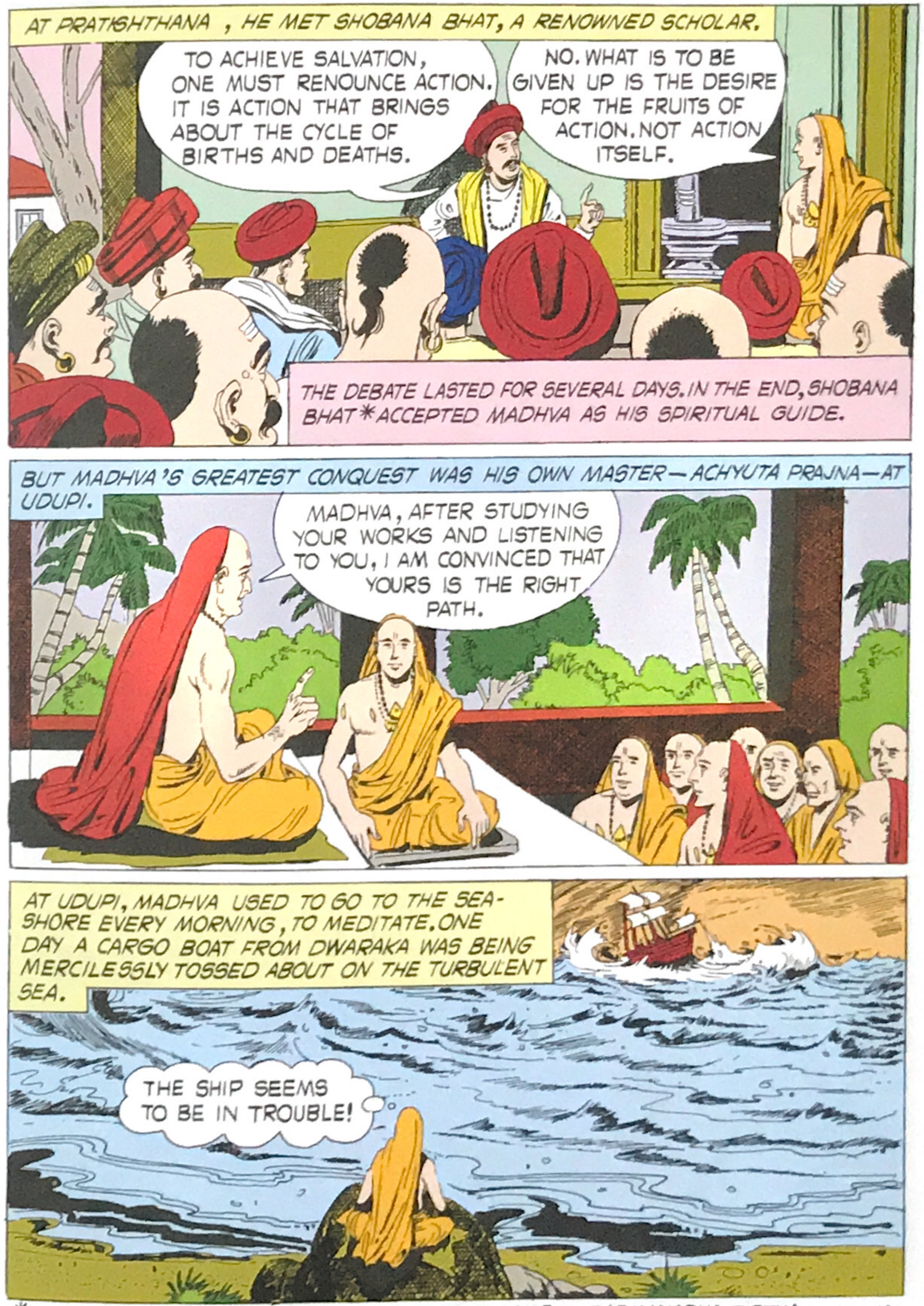


SATYATIRTHA, A DISCIPLE WHO COULD NOT BEAR TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE ACHARYA, BROKE DOWN.
O MASTER, WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU?
I'LL FOLLOW THE MASTER AND CATCH UP WITH HIM. HE COULDN'T HAVE GONE FAR.
SATYATIRTHA RAN BLINDLY. AT LAST—
THERE HE IS!
MADHVACHARYA MOVED FROM ROCK TO ROCK WITH EASE AND GRACE.
SATYATIRTHA FOLLOWED HIM WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY. TOWARDS EVENING, HE WAS EXHAUSTED.
NO, I CAN'T GO A STEP FARTHER. NOR CAN I RETURN. I AM LOST.

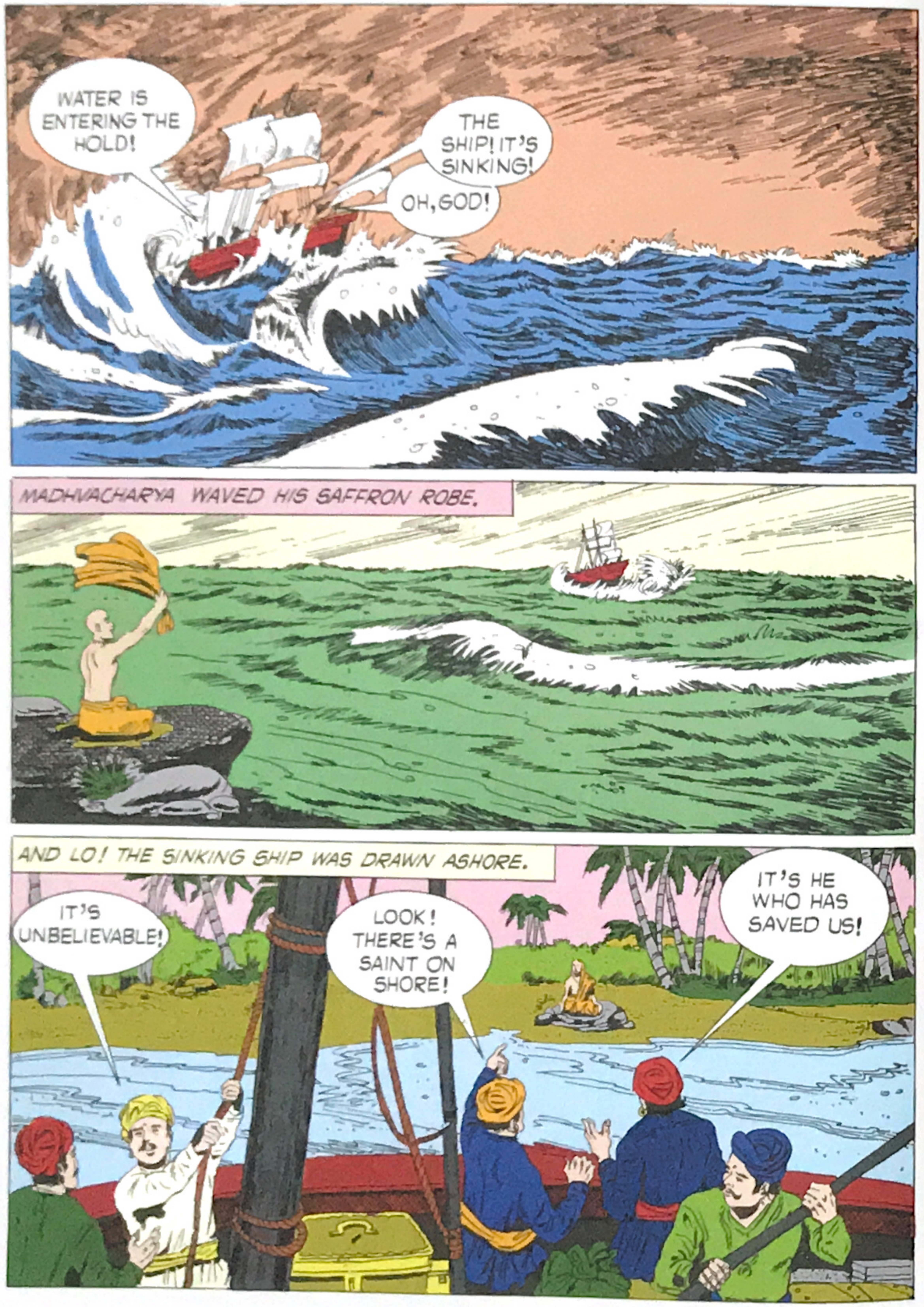
AT THAT MOMENT, THE ACHARYA HAPPENED TO LOOK BACK. HE SAW POOR SATYATIRTHA STRUGGLING FAR AWAY, TO FOLLOW HIM.
ACHARYA... A...
THE ACHARYA WAVED HIS POWERFUL HAND, SIGNALLING SATYATIRTHA TO GO BACK TO THE ASHRAM.
SATYATIRTHA FELT HIMSELF BEING LIFTED BY A POWERFUL GUST OF WIND...
...TO THE ASHRAM AT BADRI.
LOOK! IT'S SATYATIRTHA!
MADHVACHARYA MEANWHILE HAD REACHED VEDAVYASA'S ASHRAM.

* HE RECEIVED FROM VEDAVYASA EIGHT HANDFULS OF THE SACRED SOIL OF UTTARA BADRI

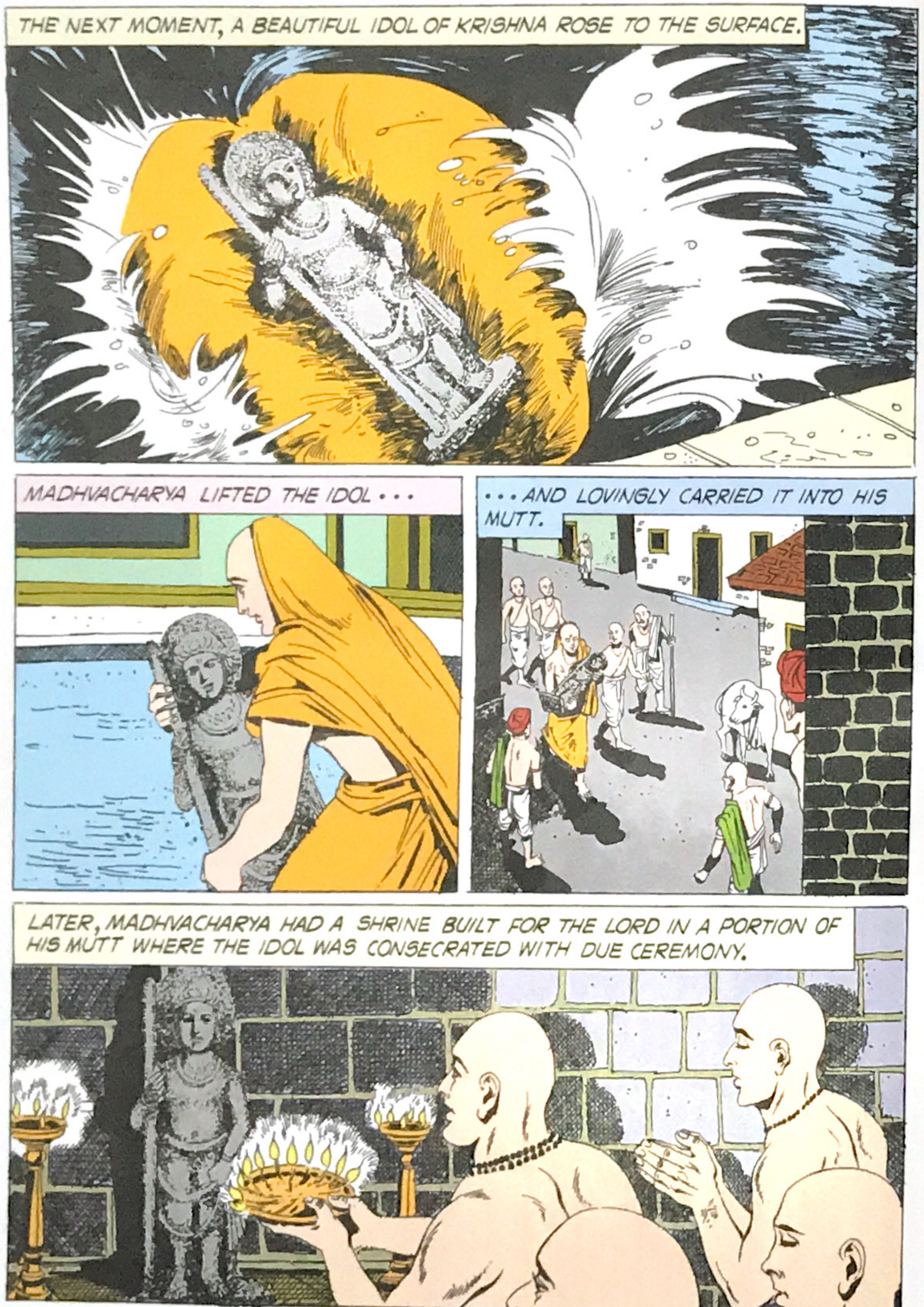
卐 APHORISMS COMPOSED BY VEDAVYASA



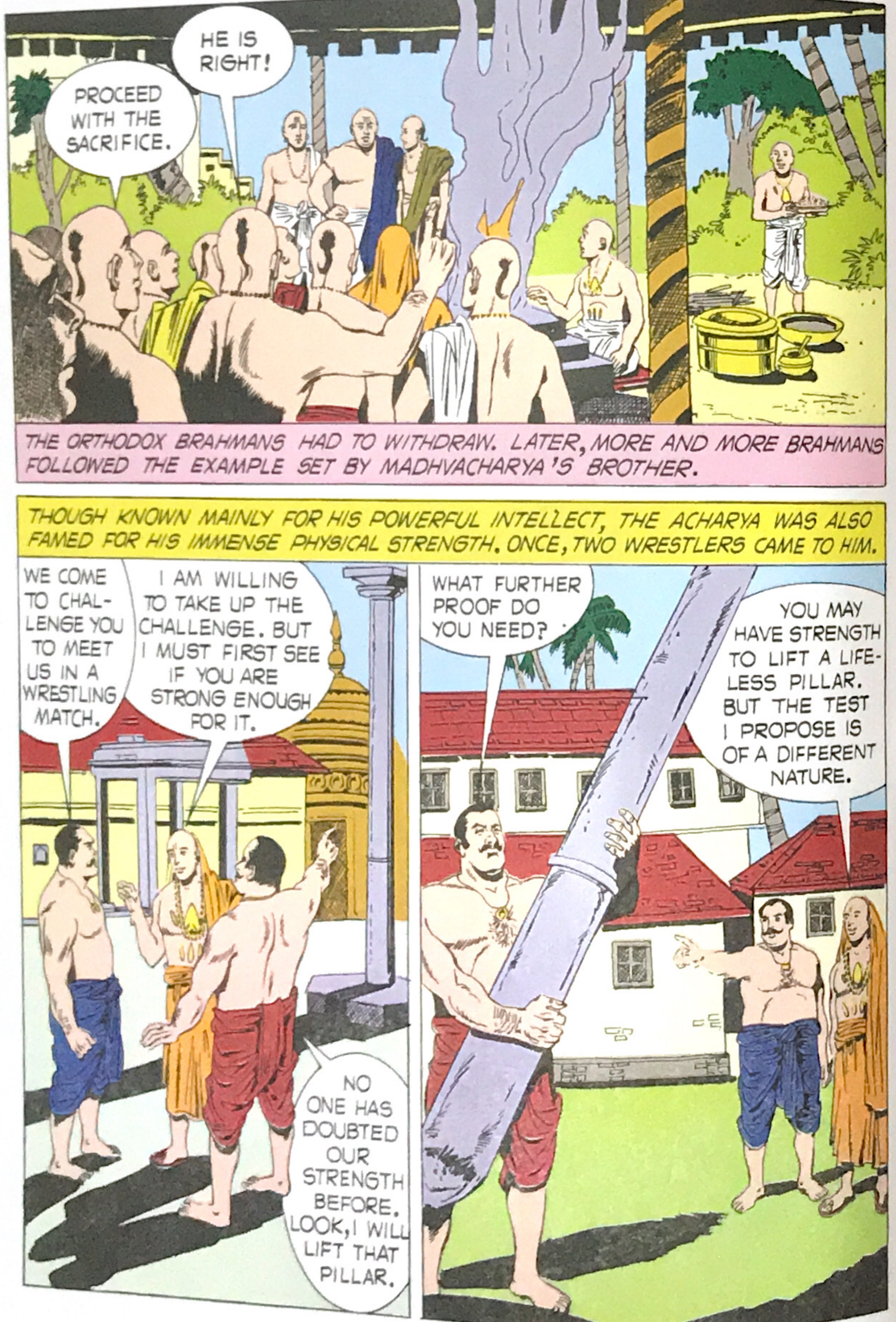
* MADHVACHARYA CONFERRED ON HIM A NEW NAME — PADMANABHA TIRTHA.

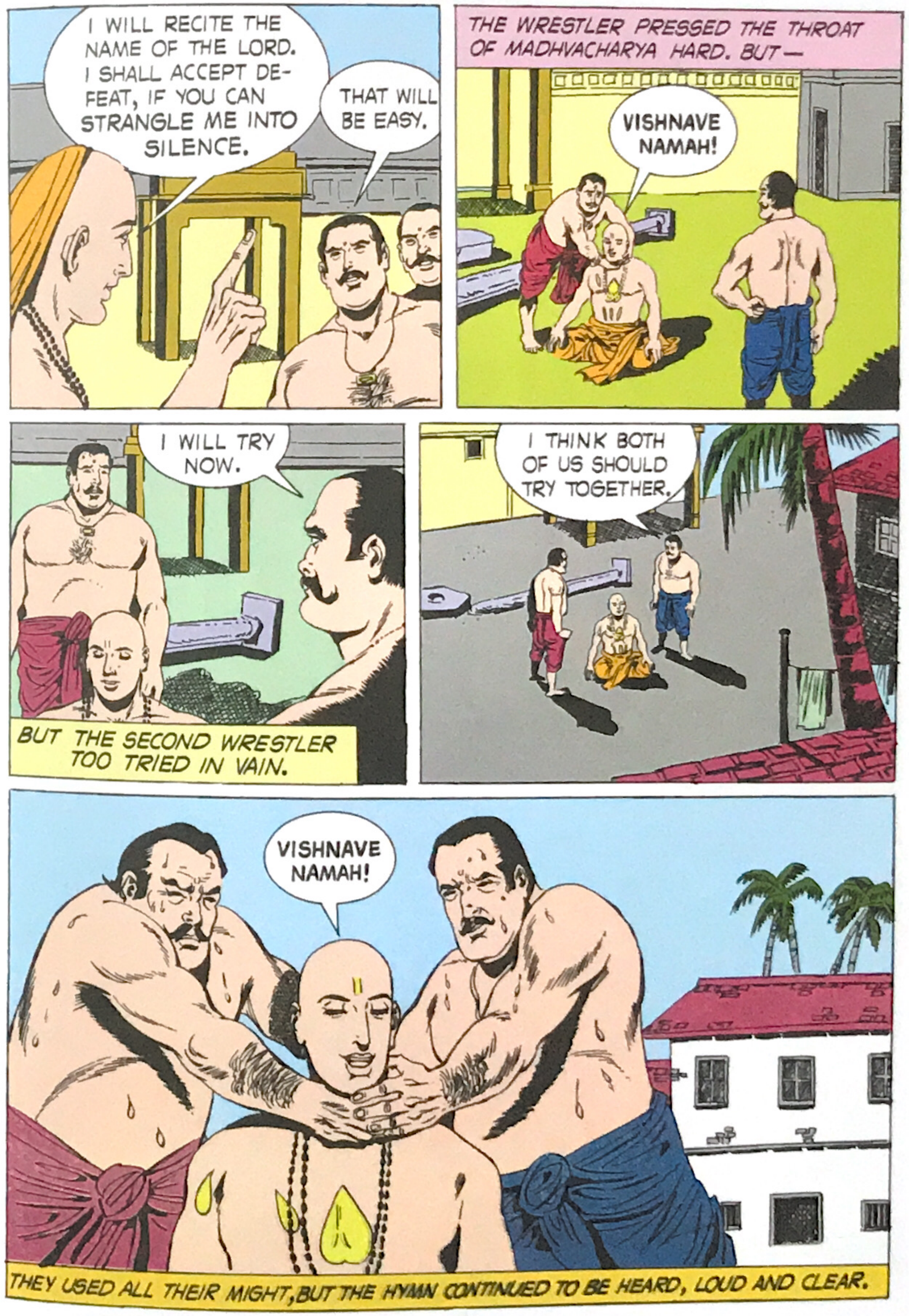


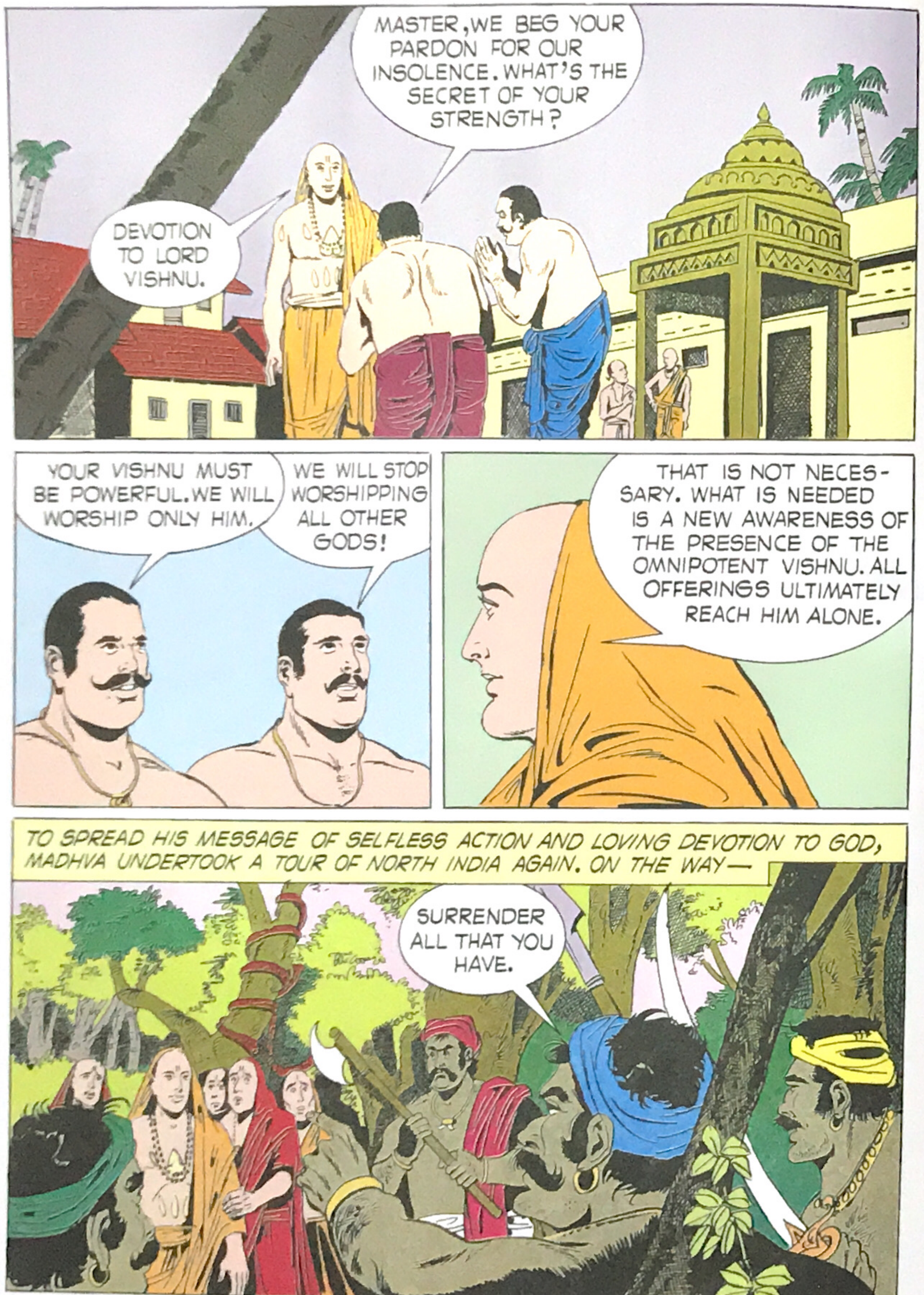
✻ CLOD OF EARTH, YELLOWISH IN COLOUR, FROM DWARAKA 卐 DVADASHA STOTRA


THE NEXT MOMENT, A BEAUTIFUL IDOL OF KRISHNA ROSE TO THE SURFACE.
MADHVACHARYA LIFTED THE IDOL . . .
. . . AND LOVINGLY CARRIED IT INTO HIS MUTT.
LATER, MADHVACHARYA HAD A SHRINE BUILT FOR THE LORD IN A PORTION OF HIS MUTT WHERE THE IDOL WAS CONSECRATED WITH DUE CEREMONY.

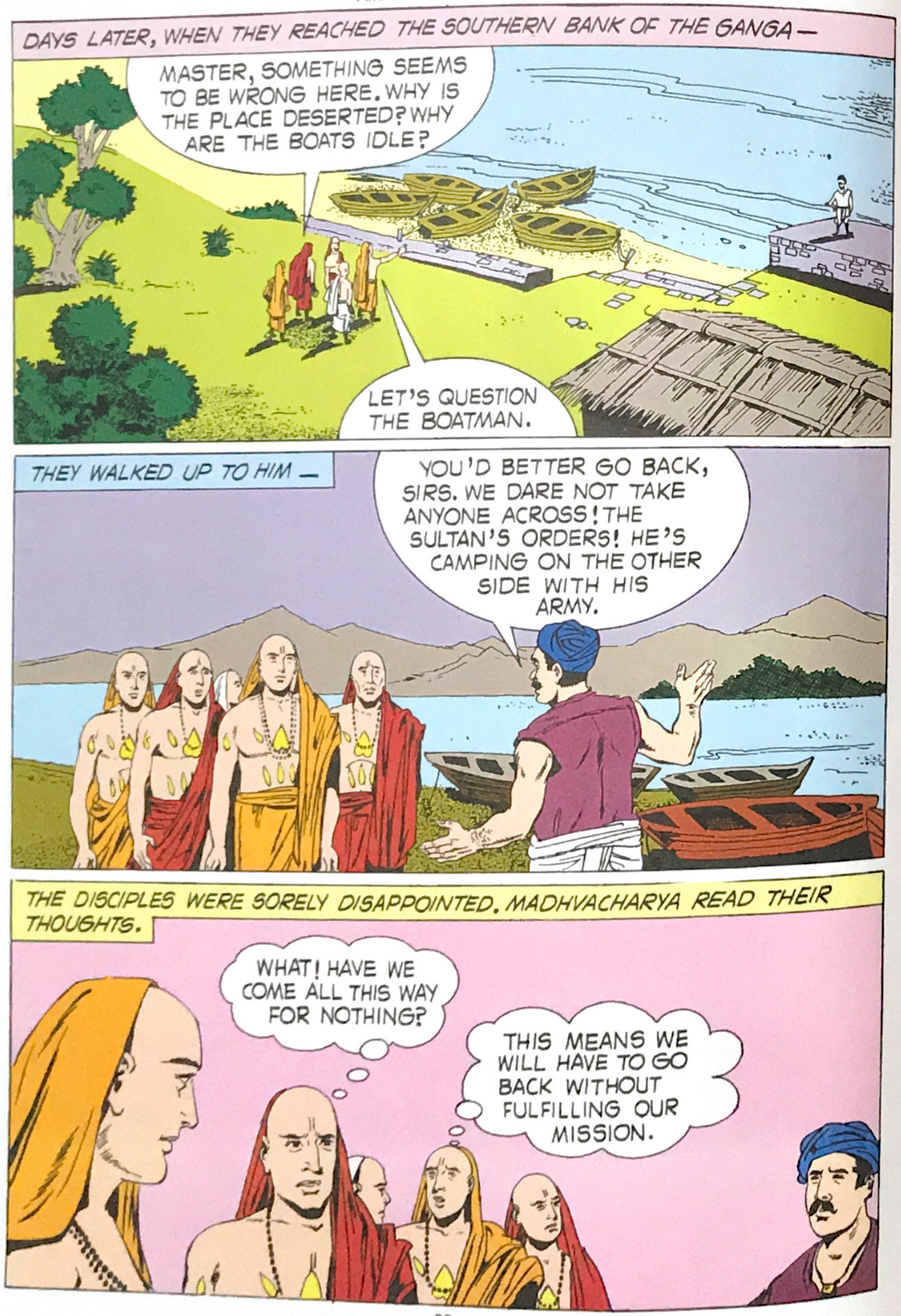
MADHVACHARYA, WHO DID NOT UPHOLD VIOLENCE, WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF KILLING ANIMALS AT THE TIME OF RITUAL SACRIFICES.
THERE IS NO NEED TO KILL LIVE ANIMALS. IMAGES MADE OF FLOUR COULD BE USED INSTEAD.
LATER, HIS BROTHER REPORTED TO MADHVACHARYA.
NO ONE IS PREPARED TO USE IMAGES. THEY CONTINUE TO KILL ANIMALS.
SOME ONE SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD. WHY DON'T YOU?
WHEN MADHVACHARYA'S BROTHER DID SO, ORTHODOX BRAHMANS INVADED THE SACRIFICIAL SITE.
STOP IT AT ONCE! THIS PRACTICE IS AGAINST THE SCRIPTURES.
YOU ARE MISTAKEN. I AM ONLY REVIVING AN OLD CUSTOM WHICH HAS THE SANCTION OF THE SCRIPTURES. MOREOVER, NO PRACTICE WHICH UPHOLDS THE SANCTITY OF LIFE COULD BE AGAINST THE SCRIPTURES.

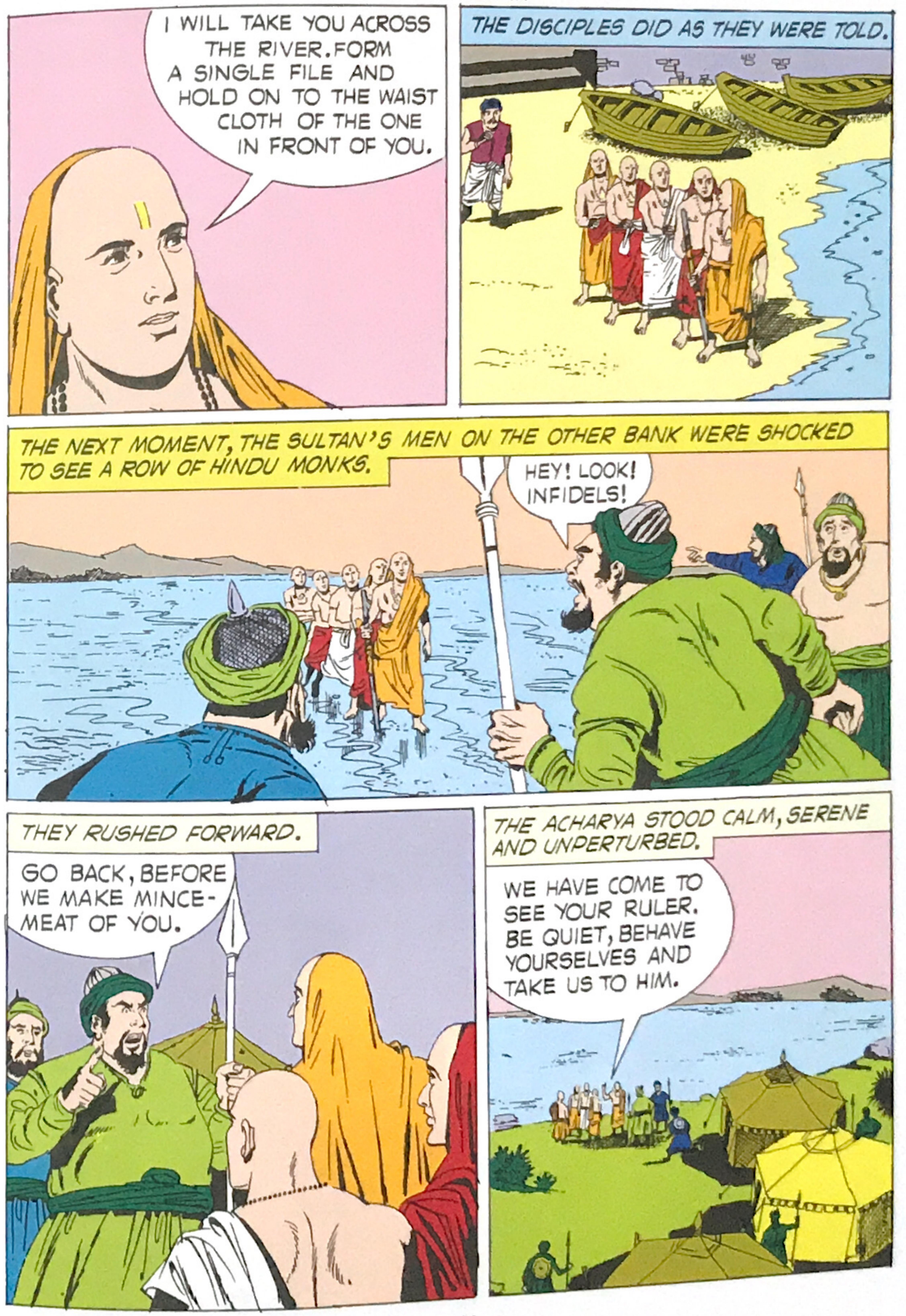

PROCEED WITH THE SACRIFICE.
HE IS RIGHT!
THE ORTHODOX BRAHMANS HAD TO WITHDRAW. LATER, MORE AND MORE BRAHMANS FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE SET BY MADHVACHARYA'S BROTHER.
THOUGH KNOWN MAINLY FOR HIS POWERFUL INTELLECT, THE ACHARYA WAS ALSO FAMED FOR HIS IMMENSE PHYSICAL STRENGTH. ONCE, TWO WRESTLERS CAME TO HIM.
WE COME TO CHAL-LENGE YOU TO MEET US IN A WRESTLING MATCH.
I AM WILLING TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE. BUT I MUST FIRST SEE IF YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH FOR IT.
NO ONE HAS DOUBTED OUR STRENGTH BEFORE. LOOK, I WILL LIFT THAT PILLAR.
WHAT FURTHER PROOF DO YOU NEED?
YOU MAY HAVE STRENGTH TO LIFT A LIFE-LESS PILLAR. BUT THE TEST I PROPOSE IS OF A DIFFERENT NATURE.

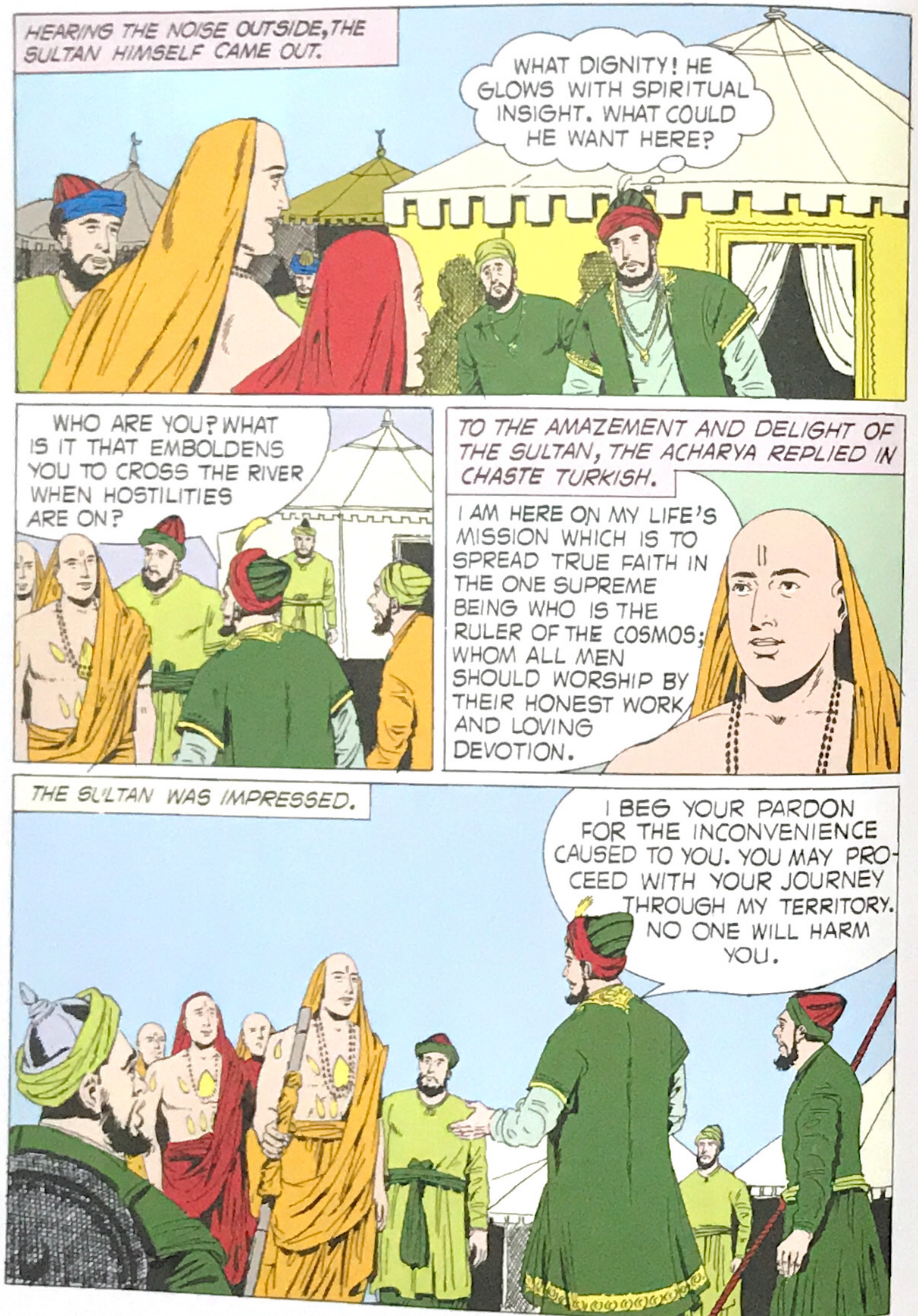

I WILL RECITE THE NAME OF THE LORD. I SHALL ACCEPT DE-FEAT, IF YOU CAN STRANGLE ME INTO SILENCE.
THAT WILL BE EASY.
THE WRESTLER PRESSED THE THROAT OF MADHVACHARYA HARD. BUT—
VISHNAVE NAMAH!
I WILL TRY NOW.
BUT THE SECOND WRESTLER TOO TRIED IN VAIN.
I THINK BOTH OF US SHOULD TRY TOGETHER.
VISHNAVE NAMAH!
THEY USED ALL THEIR MIGHT, BUT THE HYMN CONTINUED TO BE HEARD, LOUD AND CLEAR.

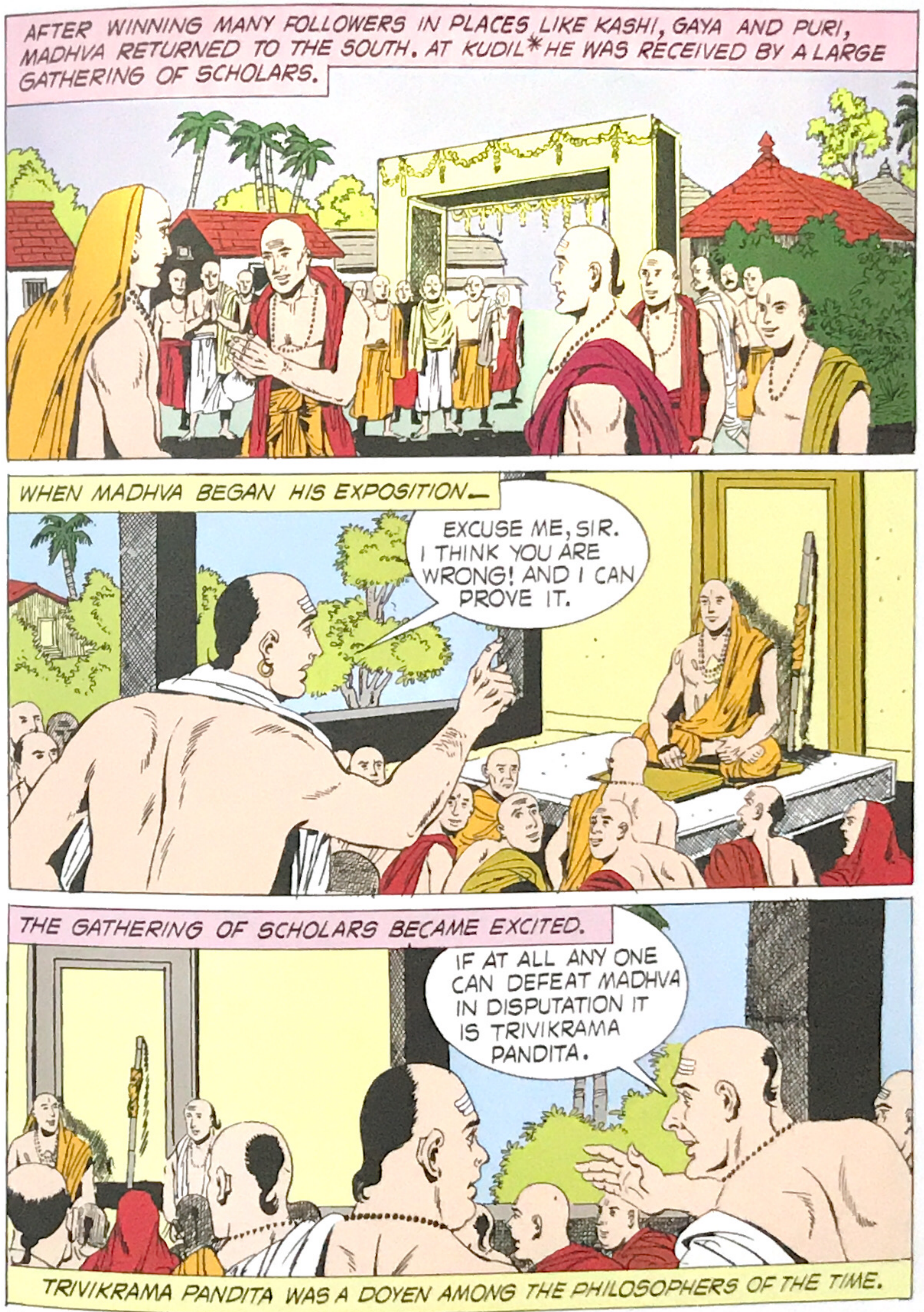

MASTER, WE BEG YOUR PARDON FOR OUR INSOLENCE. WHAT'S THE SECRET OF YOUR STRENGTH?
DEVOTION TO LORD VISHNU.
YOUR VISHNU MUST BE POWERFUL. WE WILL WORSHIP ONLY HIM.
WE WILL STOP WORSHIPPING ALL OTHER GODS!
THAT IS NOT NECESSARY. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A NEW AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE OMNIPOTENT VISHNU. ALL OFFERINGS ULTIMATELY REACH HIM ALONE.
TO SPREAD HIS MESSAGE OF SELFLESS ACTION AND LOVING DEVOTION TO GOD, MADHVA UNDERTOOK A TOUR OF NORTH INDIA AGAIN. ON THE WAY—
SURRENDER ALL THAT YOU HAVE.

MADHVACHARYA ROLLED UP ONE OF HIS ROBES . . .
. . . AND THREW IT IN THEIR MIDST.
IT JINGLES!
AH! GOLD! GOLD!
IT'S HEAVY!
IN A MINUTE THERE WAS A SCRAMBLE FOR THE BUNDLE.
GREEDY, AREN'T YOU?
NO, YOU DON'T!
GIVE IT HERE!
LEAVING THEM TO FIGHT IT OUT, THE ACHARYA AND HIS DISCIPLES MOVED ON.

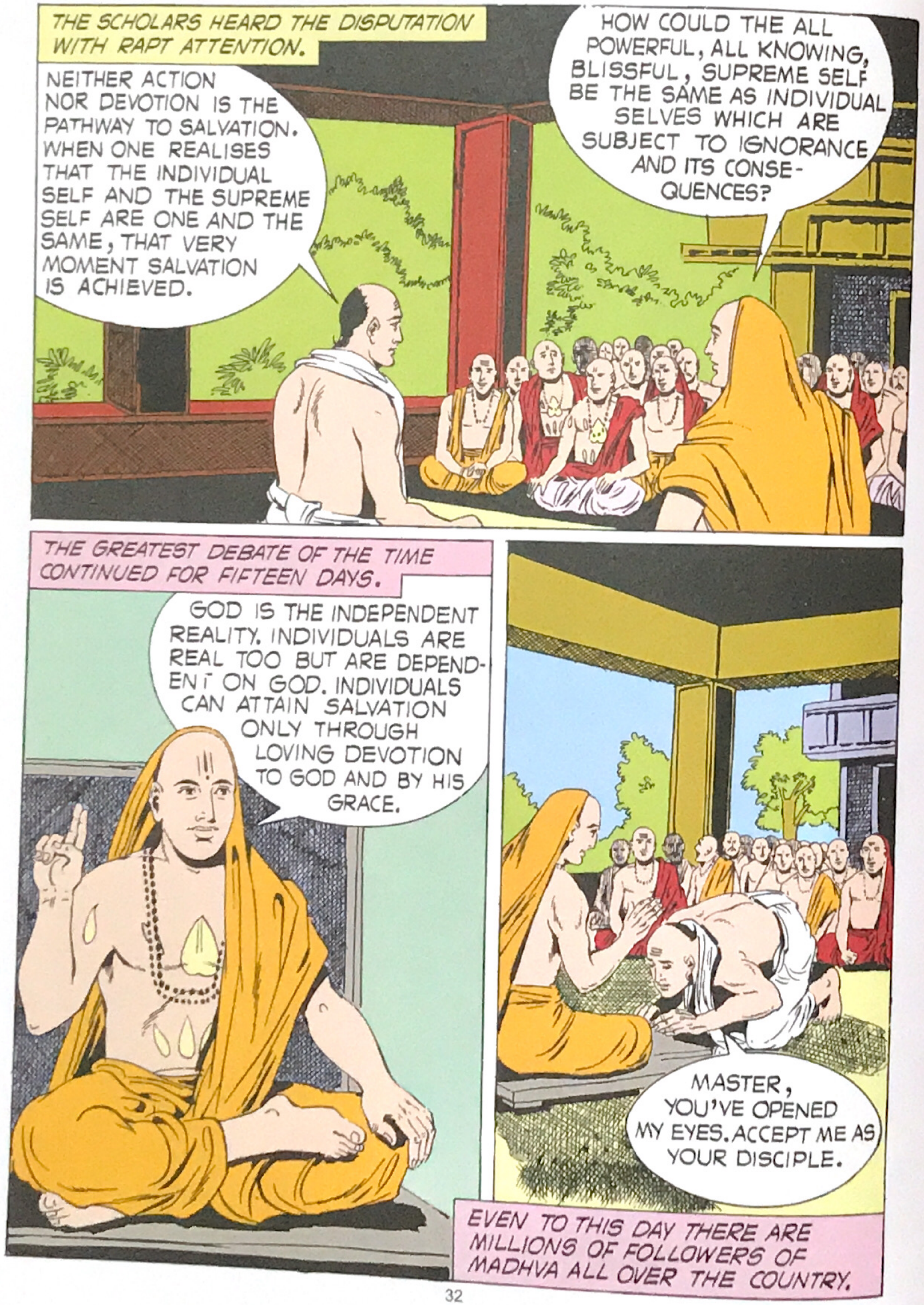

DAYS LATER, WHEN THEY REACHED THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE GANGA—
MASTER, SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE WRONG HERE. WHY IS THE PLACE DESERTED? WHY ARE THE BOATS IDLE?
LET'S QUESTION THE BOATMAN.
THEY WALKED UP TO HIM —
YOU'D BETTER GO BACK, SIRS. WE DARE NOT TAKE ANYONE ACROSS! THE SULTAN'S ORDERS! HE'S CAMPING ON THE OTHER SIDE WITH HIS ARMY.
THE DISCIPLES WERE SORELY DISAPPOINTED. MADHVACHARYA READ THEIR THOUGHTS.
WHAT! HAVE WE COME ALL THIS WAY FOR NOTHING?
THIS MEANS WE WILL HAVE TO GO BACK WITHOUT FULFILLING OUR MISSION.


I WILL TAKE YOU ACROSS THE RIVER. FORM A SINGLE FILE AND HOLD ON TO THE WAIST CLOTH OF THE ONE IN FRONT OF YOU.
THE DISCIPLES DID AS THEY WERE TOLD.
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE SULTAN'S MEN ON THE OTHER BANK WERE SHOCKED TO SEE A ROW OF HINDU MONKS.
HEY! LOOK! INFIDELS!
THEY RUSHED FORWARD.
GO BACK, BEFORE WE MAKE MINCE-MEAT OF YOU.
THE ACHARYA STOOD CALM, SERENE AND UNPERTURBED.
WE HAVE COME TO SEE YOUR RULER. BE QUIET, BEHAVE YOURSELVES AND TAKE US TO HIM.





* NEAR KASARGOD IN KERALA



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